

REMARKS

Claims 1 and 3-19 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 11, 14 and 18 are amended, claim 2 is canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein, and claim 19 is added. Thus, no new matter is added.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Office Action indication that claims 2, 4-19 and 12 include allowable subject matter. Claims 1, 11, 14 and 18 are amended to include the subject matter of claim 2, and thus are also in condition for allowance.

II. The Claims Define Patentable Subject Matter

A. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 13-15 and 18

The Office Action objects to claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 13-15 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0050799 to Murade in view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0047552 to Sano et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1, 3, 10, 11, 13-15 and 18 would not have been rendered obvious by Murade in view of Sano. As discussed above, independent claims 1, 11, 14 and 18 are amended to recite the allowable subject matter of claim 2. Thus, claims 1, 11, 14 and 18 are patentable over Murade and Sano. Further, claims 3, 10, 13 and 15, which variously depend from claims 1, 11 and 14, are also patentable over Murade for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claims 1, 11 and 14, as well as the additional features recited therein. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

B. §103(a) Rejection of Claims 16 and 17

The Office Action rejects claims 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Murade in view of Sano and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,047,717 to Taniguchi et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 16 and 17 would not have been rendered obvious by Murade in view of Sano and further in view of Taniguchi. Taniguchi does not remedy the deficiencies of Murade and Sano discussed with respect to claim 14. Further, as discussed above, claim 14 is amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 2. Claims 16 and 17 depend from claim 14. Thus, for at least the reasons discussed with respect to claim 14, claims 16 and 17 are also patentable over Murade, Sano and Taniguchi. Withdrawal of the rejection is thus respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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